

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EA/TIMBS:STAFF

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

INFO CINCPAC

XMT AMEMBASSY SUVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 304997

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PINT, ID, PT, MY

SUBJECT: EA/TIMBS WEEKLY STATUS REPORT

INDONESIA

PRISONER RELEASE - CONFIDENTIAL

THE DEC 20 RELEASE OF 10,000 PRISONERS APPEARS TO HAVE GONE WELL. AMB. MASTERS, ALONG WITH 11 OTHER CHIEFS OF MISSION AND SIX OTHER EMB REPS ATTENDED THE MAJOR CEREMONY NEAR MEDAN. AMB. MASTERS REPORTS THAT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES, ALL OF WHOM HAD OPPORTUNITIES TO TALK WITH THOSE BEING RELEASED, WERE UNANIMOUSLY OF THE VIEW THAT THE EVENT NEAR MEDAN WAS EXACTLY WHAT IT PURPORTED TO BE, THE ACTUAL RELEASE OF 886 DETAINEES WHO WERE GIVEN A FREE CHOICE OF RETURNING TO THEIR FORMER HOMES OR JOINING A RESETTLEMENT
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PROJECT (ONLY 20 OF THOSE RELEASED IN THE MEDAN CEREMONY SO CHOSE.) A MUCH SMALLER GROUP AT BANDUNG, ALL OF WHOM WERE PROCEEDING HOME, SEEMED TO REGARD THEMSELVES AS FULLY FREE AND GAVE NO INDICATION OF INTIMIDATION IN THEIR CONVERSATIONS. THAT BEING SAID, IT SHOULD NONETHELESS BE KEPT IN MIND THAT IN A COUNTRY NOT NOTED FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY A MASS RELEASE PROGRAM WILL INEVITABLY BE

IMPLEMENTED UNEVENLY.

US PRESS REPORTAGE TO DATE HAS TENDED TO BE NEUTRAL TO SNIPING, WITH THAT FROM BURU (POST AND TIMES) THE MOST DEPRECATORY. WE HAVE SEEN NO EDITORIAL COMMENT YET. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL RELEASED A STATEMENT WELCOMING THE GOI ANNOUNCEMENT, BUT STATING THAT PENDING RELEASES OF NAMES, DATES AND PLACES "THERE IS NO BASIS FOR BELIEVING AT FACE VALUE" THE GOI'S STATEMENTS ON NUMBERS RELEASED. AI ALSO ASSERTED THE NUMBER STILL HELD "IS PROBABLY AS HIGH AS 100,000" AND CALLED FOR IMMEDIATE AND UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE OF ALL REMAINING DETAINEES, ASSERTING THAT THE GOI DELAY ON GROUNDS OF HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT IS "UNJUSTIFIABLE". AI'S WASHINGTON REP, ON THE OTHER HAND, EXPRESSED PLEASED AMAZEMENT TO TIMBS THAT 10,000 HAD APPARENTLY ACTUALLY BEEN RELEASED. THE RELEASES DID NOT COME UP AT NOON BRIEFINGS ON DEC. 20 OR 21 AND OUR GUIDANCE REMAINS UNUSED EXCEPT FOR SEVERAL SPECIFIC TELEPHONE INQUIRIES.

DOMESTIC POLITICAL DEVELOPMENGs - CONFIDENTIAL

THE POLITICAL TEMPERATURE IN INDONESIA APPEARS TO BE MOUNTING SIGNIFICANTLY AS THE MARCH MPR ELECTION OF A PRESIDENT APPROACHES. ARMED FORCES COMMANDERS, MEETING IN JAKARTA DEC 13-15, ISSUED A FIRM STATEMENT OF UNITY AND DETERMINATION TO PRESERVE PUBLIC ORDER AND OPPOSE
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ILLEGAL DISSIDENCE. WHILE THE IMMEDIATE TARGET OF THE COMMANDERS' WARNING WAS UNDOUBTEDLY THE INCREASINGLY BOLD STUDENT DISSIDENT COMMUNITY, THE EMBASSY'S PRESS AND OTHER SOURCES QUICKLY SPECULATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS EQUALLY ALARMED BY ALLEGED BEHIND THE SCENES ACTIVITIES OF PROMINENT OPPOSITIONISTS SUCH AS RETIRED GEN. NASUTION AND FORMER JAKARTA GOVERNOR ALI SADIKIN. EAST JAVA MILITARY COMMANDER WITARMIN REPORTEDLY SUBSEQUENTLY STATED THAT THERE ARE SENIOR MILITARY WHO SUPPORT THE "OVERTHROW OF SUHARTO". THE EMBASSY COMMENTS THAT WITARMIN'S STATEMENT, EVEN IF ACCURATELY QUOTED, DOES NOT PROVE THE EXISTENCE OF AN ANTI-SUHARTO CABAL. THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE, HOWEVER, THAT THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH A GROUP IS BELIEVED BY AT LEAST SOME TOP MILITARY OFFICERS. SUHARTO HIMSELF IS REPORTED TO HAVE CAUTIONED THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP THAT, WHILE HE ENDORSES THEIR DEC 15 STATEMENT AGAINST DISSIDENT, THE MILITARY SHOULD NOT "GENERALIZE" ITS RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC ACTS OF DISSIDENCE INTO A GENERAL CRACKDOWN. FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS REMAIN UNCLEAR AT THIS POINT, BUT THE PROSPECT WOULD APPEAR TO BE FOR HEIGHTENED TENSION IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

EAST TIMOR - CONFIDENTIAL

CONGRESSMAN FRASER CONTINUES TO WRITE THE SECRETARY ABOUT EAST TIMOR DEVELOPMENTS. HIS LATEST LETTER SEEKS INFORMATION ON THE USE OF OV-10S IN THE AREA, SPECIFICALLY WHETHER THEY ARE BEING USED TO SPRAY CROPS IN FRETILIN AREAS. HE ALSO ASKS THE DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS ON FRETILIN STRENGTH AND ALLEGED RECENT ATROCITIES. WE ARE SENDING A PROVISIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT WHILE PREPARING A MORE SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSE.

REGARDING POSSIBLE ICRC VISITS TO EAST TIMOR, BOTH ACTING FONMIN MOCHTAR AND ADMIRAL SUDOMO HAVE SPECIFICALLY TOLD AMB. MASTERS THAT PRESS REPORTS THAT THE GOI HAS REFUSED
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SUCH AN ICRC REQUEST ARE INCORRECT SINCE THE RECENT ICRC DELEGATION TO JAKARTA TO FINALIZE PRISON VISIT PLANS HAD NOT RAISED THE SUBJECT. THE FOREIGN DEPT DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS TOLD AMB. MASTERS EARLIER THIS MONTH THAT THE GOI IS OPPOSED TO SUCH VISITS, ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT ACCEPT VISITS BY RELIGIOUS GROUPS. AMB. MASTERS PLANS TO FOLLOW UP THIS POSSIBILITY AT AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY.

MALAYSIA

AFP REPORTS THAT SRV FOREIGN MINISTER NGUYEN DUY TRINH IS SCHEDULED TO MAKE A THREE DAY OFFICIAL VISIT TO MALAYSIA STARTING JANUARY 3 IN RETURN FOR THE VISIT BY MALAYSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER RITHAUDDEEN TO HANOI LAST MAY. FOREIGN MINISTER TRINH WILL BE IN JAKARTA FROM DEC 28 TO 31 FOLLOWING A VISIT TO BANGKOK.

THAILAND

AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE HAS COMPLETED HIS WORK ON THE SELECTION BOARDS AND WILL DEPART WASHINGTON DECEMBER 22 TO SPEND THE HOLIDAYS IN FLORIDA. HE WILL BE BACK IN BANGKOK ON DECEMBER 30.

REGIONAL

ASST SEC DERIAN TO VISIT AREA - LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PATT DERIAN'S VISIT PLANS ARE BECOMING SOMEWHAT MORE FIRM WITH PLANNED VISITS FOLLOWING THE CM CONFERENCE TO THAILAND, SINGAPORE, INDONESIA, SOUTH KOREA AND THE PHILIPPINES. THE SUBJECTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS AND REFUGEES. IN ADDITION TO OFFICIAL CONTACTS A DRAFT ITINERARY CABLE
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NOTES HER WISH TO HAVE INFORMAL HUMAN RIGHTS SESSIONS WITH
EMBASSY STAFFS PLUS MEET WITH PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS IN
THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD AND, IN INDONESIA, RELEASED
DETAINEES. VANCE

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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